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Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/33 S, Member States, including the five nuclear-weapon States, were invited to continue to cooperate with Mongolia in taking the necessary measures to consolidate and strengthen Mongolia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, the inviolability of its borders, its economic security, its ecological balance and its nuclear-weapon-free status, as well as its independent foreign policy.

At the same time, the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations bodies were requested to continue to provide assistance to Mongolia in taking the necessary measures in that regard.

The present report contains an account of new developments and the assistance accorded to Mongolia by the Secretariat and relevant United Nations bodies. Regarding Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, on 27 October 2000 the five nuclear-weapon States jointly issued a statement on security assurances in connection with Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, in which they took into account Mongolia's unique geographical status and reaffirmed their positive and negative security assurances contained in Security Council resolution 984 (1995) of 11 April 1995. As a way of assisting Mongolia in strengthening its nuclear-weapon-free status, the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, through its Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, organized a United Nations-sponsored non-governmental expert group meeting in September 2001 in Sapporo, Japan. As a result of the meeting, experts adopted the

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Sapporo document, containing recommendations including elements of legally binding international instruments recognizing Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status.

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme agreed to assist Mongolia in strengthening its international security by undertaking two studies on economic vulnerability and ecological vulnerability. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Atomic Energy Agency and other United Nations agencies continue to support Mongolia's international security through their activities in Mongolia.

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–2	3
II.	Activities related to Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status	3–13	3
III.	Non-nuclear aspects of Mongolia's international security	14–36	4
IV.	Conclusion	37	8

I. Introduction

1. On 20 November 2000, the General Assembly adopted resolution 55/33 S, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status", paragraphs 5, 7 and 8 of which read as follows:

> "*The General Assembly*,
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> "...
>
> "5. *Invites* Member States to continue to cooperate with Mongolia in taking the necessary measures to consolidate and strengthen Mongolia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, the inviolability of its borders, its economic security, its ecological balance and its nuclear-weapon-free status, as well as its independent foreign policy;
>
> "7. *Requests* the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations bodies to continue to provide assistance to Mongolia in taking the necessary measures mentioned in paragraph 5 above;
>
> "8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session on the implementation of the present resolution;"

2. The present report has been prepared in response to the request contained in paragraph 8 of the above-mentioned resolution.

II. Activities related to Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status

3. Since the presentation of the last report on this subject dated 20 July 2000 (A/55/166), the developments described below have taken place.

4. During the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, on 27 October 2000, China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America (the five nuclear-weapon States) issued a statement on security assurances in connection with Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status (A/55/530-S/2000/1052), in which they took into account Mongolia's status as a non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as its unique geographic status. They also affirmed, inter alia, their commitment to Mongolia to seek immediate Security Council action to provide assistance to Mongolia, as a non-nuclear-weapon State party to the NPT, in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 984 (1995) of 11 April 1995, and their respective unilateral negative security assurances as stated in their declarations issued on 5 and 6 of April 1995 and referred to in Council resolution 984 (1995). In the same statement, China and the Russian Federation recalled and confirmed the legally binding commitments undertaken by them with respect to Mongolia through the conclusion of bilateral treaties with Mongolia regarding those matters.

5. Along with the adoption in February 2000 of a domestic law defining and regulating nuclear-weapon-free status by the State Great Hural of Mongolia, the Mongolian Parliament (see A/55/56-S/2000/160), the joint statement of the five nuclear-weapon States was a positive contribution to further promote Mongolia's initiative on its nuclear-weapon-free status.

6. After receiving the joint statement of the five nuclear-weapon States, on 17 October 2000 the Government of Mongolia stated (see A/55/491-S/2000/994) that:

> "It believes that the statement by the nuclear-weapon States represents an important step towards institutionalizing Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status at the international level. The Mongolian Government reaffirms its readiness to cooperate with all the member States of the United Nations and the relevant United Nations bodies in enhancing the effectiveness and strengthening the credibility of the status."

To further strengthen that credibility, in November 2000, the Mongolian Parliament adopted the Law on Import, Cross-border Transportation and Export of Dangerous Wastes. In June 2001, the Law on Radiation Protection and Safety was enacted.

7. With regard to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) efforts in this area, IAEA's verification mandate vis-à-vis Mongolia is prescribed by the terms of the comprehensive safeguards agreement concluded between IAEA and Mongolia, which entered into force on 5 September 1972. An important further step in that regard was Mongolia's decision to conclude an additional protocol to its comprehensive safeguards agreement, which was signed on 5 December 2001.

The results of IAEA inspection activities under the above two instruments may be cited as evidence to support Mongolia's compliance with its nuclear-weapon-free status if Mongolia so decides.

8. During the last two years, the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, through its Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, has continued to provide Mongolia with assistance to take the necessary measures in consolidating and strengthening its nuclear-weapon-free status by putting this initiative on the agendas of the Thirteenth Regional Disarmament Meeting in Asia and the Pacific, held in Kathmandu in March 2001, and of a seminar held in Nagasaki, Japan, on the theme "The United Nations and disarmament", which the Centre helped to organize in August 2001. At both meetings, the Mongolian participants provided a brief history of the initiative, ranging from its launching in 1992 to the adoption of two General Assembly resolutions and the adoption of the domestic law. At the same time, while appreciating the two General Assembly resolutions and the joint statement of the five nuclear-weapon States, Mongolia felt that those three documents lacked the definition and regulations of a nuclear-weapon-free status at the international level.

9. In response to the request of Mongolia to further strengthen and consolidate its nuclear-weapon-free status, the Centre organized a United Nations-sponsored non-governmental expert group meeting on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status in Sapporo, Japan, on 5 and 6 September 2001. The expert group consisted of experts from the five nuclear-weapon States and Mongolia, and officials of the Mongolian Government.

10. The experts examined all relevant resolutions and documents. As a result of the meeting, the experts adopted the Sapporo document (see A/57/59), which contains the consideration of Mongolia's proposals, elements of legally binding international instruments recognizing Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, the characteristics of Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status and a presentation of models of legal instruments. In one of the recommendations, the experts accepted that Mongolia did not currently have either an internationally recognized or legally binding nuclear-weapon-free status, and that its representatives should focus their efforts on identifying options through which it could achieve that.

11. Mongolia, as a first step, has initiated consultations with neighbouring States, using the Sapporo document as a basis. While awaiting the decision of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, the Centre is prepared to provide further assistance to promote this unique initiative contributing to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, thus strengthening the NPT.

12. In the communiqué of the ministerial meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Durban, South Africa, on 29 April 2002, the ministers reiterated their support for Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status and considered that the institutionalization of that status would be an important measure towards strengthening the non-proliferation regime in that region.

13. In the declaration of the heads of State of the member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, issued in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, on 7 June 2002, member States stressed that they respected and supported Mongolia's non-nuclear status.

III. Non-nuclear aspects of Mongolia's international security

14. The Secretary-General has been paying particular attention to dialogue with Mongolia's leadership on various issues pertaining to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 55/33 S. In his meetings with the Prime Minister of Mongolia in November 2001 and its Foreign Minister in September 2000, the Secretary-General praised the Government for its efforts to consolidate democracy and economic reform. He also expressed the view that Mongolia's initiative on its nuclear-weapon-free status was contributing to regional stability and assured the Mongolian leaders that the Organization would continue to support it. In a meeting with the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva in June 2002, the President of Mongolia expressed the desire to use United Nations expertise in economic transition to persist with the necessary reforms, in particular the establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises and land reform. He also stated that Mongolia was focusing on human-centred development and on ensuring human security in the country, and that the Government was concentrating on attracting investment to the mining

and telecommunications industries and on boosting job growth.

15. In the Secretary-General's message of 3 September 2001 to a conference held in Ulaanbaatar on Mongolia-United Nations cooperation (see SG/SM/7938), he stressed that the specialized agencies had implemented programmes — for the advancement of women, to preserve the environment and more — that are among the most innovative in the world. He also noted that Mongolia had drawn attention to the unique challenges facing the world's landlocked countries.

16. In a letter dated 5 November 2001 (A/56/606), the Permanent Representative of Mongolia forwarded to the Secretary-General a memorandum of the Government on the measures taken by Mongolia to implement the United Nations Millennium Declaration. That document illustrated a broad gamut of steps pursued by the Government to implement many of the measures stipulated in the General Assembly resolution in question. At the same time, it testified to the enormous challenges facing the country, particularly in the social and economic areas. The Secretary-General hopes that Member States will take the memorandum into account while continuing to cooperate with Mongolia.

17. Ongoing democratic transformation is another important aspect of Mongolia's security. Steadily improving prospects for democratic governance, transparency, participation and the rule of law in Mongolia contribute to a more stable security situation in the whole region. In that context, the Mongolian Government is organizing the Fifth International Conference on New or Restored Democracies, which will be held from 18 to 20 June 2003 in Ulaanbaatar. In its resolution 56/269, the General Assembly welcomed the proposal. The Secretary-General salutes the Government and the people of Mongolia for this initiative.

18. Over 100 countries, many at the head of State or Government or Foreign Minister level, are expected to participate in the Conference, together with the representatives of civil society, the United Nations and other international organizations. High-level attendance at the Conference will contribute to greater confidence and trust in the region and promote greater prospects for democracy at the global level. The Conference may also encourage more foreign investment and international assistance, which in turn will help to improve the prospects for Mongolia's economic security. The Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are actively assisting the Government of Mongolia in organizing the Conference.

19. Paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 55/33 S contains a variety of elements to ensure Mongolia's international security beyond its nuclear-weapon-free status. Those non-nuclear aspects of international security, including economic security and ecological balance, are being considered on a bilateral basis. In paragraph 7 of the above-mentioned resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations bodies to continue to provide assistance to Mongolia in taking the necessary measures under paragraph 5 of the same resolution. In order to address non-nuclear aspects and working methods in dealing with those aspects, the Centre held numerous consultations with the Permanent Mission of Mongolia to the United Nations on a regular basis. For the same purpose, it organized informal meetings, inviting relevant United Nations bodies to attend. It also held bilateral consultations with IAEA, UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

20. A United Nations consultative group meeting was convened on 17 January 2002 by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat to discuss the status of implementation of the non-nuclear aspects of General Assembly resolution 55/33 S. Designated focal points within UNDP, UNEP, the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and the Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations attended the meeting. The results of the meeting were conveyed to IAEA, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

21. As a result of the meeting, each body was requested to provide information on its activities related to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 55/33 S, to be included in the present report. UNDP was requested to act as coordinator by compiling inputs from each body for the preparation of

the non-nuclear aspects of the report. Two meetings were held for that purpose. The relevant activities undertaken by the various United Nations bodies are described below.

22. In response to a request from the Government of Mongolia, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with the support of the United Nations resident coordinator and the UNDP office in Ulaanbaatar, undertook a scoping mission from 2 to 6 June 2002 to Mongolia. Its objective was to map out the process of developing the proposed studies on economic and environmental vulnerability and to outline their possible content. The mission conducted extensive consultations with Mongolian government officials and experts, as well as with the office of the United Nations resident coordinator/UNDP resident representative in Ulaanbaatar, who is the coordinator of the effort of the international community in support of development of the studies.

23. The mission concluded that there was already a wealth of readily available data and high-quality studies about Mongolia, including those developed with the assistance of UNDP, within the framework of defining the concept of human security in Mongolia. From that point of view, with only minimal additional research, developing such studies would seem quite feasible.

24. The mission examined the actual situation of the country, with particular regard to its development constraints and vulnerabilities, and noted that it is a landlocked country with very fragile ecosystems, whose geography and small scale of economy play an important role in defining its vulnerability. The high ratio of landmass to population creates an additional problem of internal remoteness that hampers many economic activities and delivery of social services. Mongolia is also remote from global markets and bears a relatively high cost of freight and insurance for its imports and exports.[1] Its economy depends on a very limited number of international markets and is based on the production and export of a small number of commodities, with most processing taking place overseas.[2] Livestock raising is the backbone of Mongolia's economy, and if structural changes with relation to that industry were made in the economy in response to globalization there would be far-reaching implications for Mongolia's people in social and cultural terms. Finally Mongolia suffers from a low rate of growth and high volatility of production and gross domestic product (GDP).

25. The mission thus suggested that the study on economic vulnerability focus on the developmental challenges of transition from a centrally planned to a market economy; the need to integrate into the global, knowledge-based, networked economy; the need to reduce Mongolia's dependence on official development assistance (ODA); the need to adapt to fast-changing regional developments; and promoting cooperation with its neighbours.

26. The study on environmental vulnerability should focus on challenges posed by the effects of climate change; environmentally unsustainable production and behaviour patterns; overgrazing and land degradation,[3] natural disasters[4] and transboundary issues.

27. The findings of the mission were that the Government of Mongolia would be well advised to take a decision on the context in which future work on the vulnerability of Mongolia will be conducted. The criterion should be the opportunity created for minimizing vulnerability and/or increasing resistance and resilience to risk factors.

28. As one option, Mongolia could conduct the study of its vulnerability in the context of clarifying or redefining its status in the international community, especially vis-à-vis donors, in an effort to maintain or increase ODA flows and secure access to other economic benefits. Mongolia represents a borderline case as far as the least developed countries category is concerned. It also represents a borderline case in terms of the definition of small countries. However, taking into consideration the current patterns of Mongolia's production and exports and the already relatively high levels of ODA, pursuit of that choice would have to be preceded by a thorough calculation of expected benefits.

29. The mission believes that at the core of Mongolia's vulnerability is its reliance on production and export via the transit countries of a few commodities. Further expansion of that production would increase Mongolia's demand for energy and pressure on the natural environment. With the wealth creation opportunities in the world moving away from countries that produce and export raw materials, continuation of that pattern of economic activities might not guarantee either environmental sustainability or high rates of economic growth. Therefore, as

another option, Mongolia could conduct the study of its vulnerability in the context of developing a long-term economic policy in support of national security. The June 2002 national conference on economic development and security and its follow-up provide such a context.

30. In the opinion of the mission, it would be important that the policy take due account of Mongolia's greatest asset, i.e., its human resources, which still enjoy a very high level of literacy and overall education. Mongolia may choose to increasingly seek growth opportunities in joining the high-value end of the global manufacturing process that rewards knowledge and skills. Its advantages in having an educated and skilled workforce and a strategic location in the same time zone as leading Asian economies and 10 to 13 hours ahead of the major service markets in the western hemisphere may help convert Mongolia into a producer of valuable yet so-called "weightless" knowledge products and services that can be marketed and transported over the Internet.

31. A long-term economic growth policy supported by national consensus would constitute a good framework for a dialogue with donors and private investors (domestic and foreign). In particular, putting ODA within the framework of such a policy as well as within the framework of transparent, effective and efficient management of ODA might go a long way towards securing the needed levels of financial assistance for Mongolia.

32. Any future work on studying Mongolia's vulnerability should be conducted in a participatory way, bringing together the wealth of experience and knowledge in the country itself. On the basis of the results of the mission, the Government of Mongolia may wish to develop a timeline for events that within the chosen context would lead to an in-depth study of economic and environmental vulnerability of Mongolia. The cooperation of the international organizations and donors is desirable and would be required to be coordinated through the Office of the United Nations resident coordinator in Ulaanbaatar.

33. With regard to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, great efforts have been made, through its coordination of the international response to the two consecutive winter disasters known as *dzud*, to mobilize the donor community. Since the beginning of the crisis, donor countries and international organizations have responded generously to the international appeals, contributing $25.3 million, including $2.75 million channelled through United Nations agencies. The key objective of the relief effort was to reduce the vulnerability of the herders (30 per cent of the population); prevent malnutrition, especially among children and pregnant women; and provide support to the health sector and improve disaster preparedness.

34. With regard to the environment, UNEP has been working closely with the Government of Mongolia through its regional office based in Bangkok as well as its headquarters. Assistance was extended through such conferences as a national forum on combating desertification and promoting the synergistic implementation of inter-linked multilateral environmental conventions, held in June 2001, and the seventh meeting of senior officials on environmental cooperation for north-east Asia, held in Beijing in July 2001, as well as offers of support for the next meeting to be hosted by Mongolia in 2002.

35. Given the unique environmental situation in Mongolia, UNEP has focused on addressing land degradation and desertification. Both substantive and financial support have been provided towards the preparation of a research publication entitled *Global Alarm: Dust and Sandstorms in the World's Drylands*, including case studies from Mongolia and North-East Asia released during the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, held in October 2001. A Global Environment Facility (GEF) proposal is currently being developed with the collaboration of the Convention to Combat Desertification and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on the theme "Prevention and control of dust and sand storms in North-East Asia", with the active support and cooperation of the Governments of Mongolia and China.

36. In terms of capacity-building efforts, a two-day national consultation workshop on the first draft Mongolia state of the environment report was convened in October 2001, in coordination with the Ministry of Nature and Environment of Mongolia. The state of the environment report is a comprehensive assessment of the environment, completed with the assistance of experts from Mongolia. Technical

assistance to the national ozone unit of Mongolia was also provided to assist with promoting awareness and the implementation of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer of May 2001. Cooperation on developing projects to mobilize resources from GEF will be particularly relevant during 2002, given the focus being placed on land degradation and desertification by GEF. Further areas of possible cooperation being explored include natural resource management and capacity-building in the field of environmental law.

IV. Conclusion

37. As described above, Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status and its other efforts to strengthen its international security, have met with wide international support. In that connection, the United Nations has extended its assistance to Mongolia for the promotion of its international security and its nuclear-weapon-free status. The Secretary-General hopes that the security assurances given by the five nuclear-weapon States and the Sapporo document will greatly contribute to the consolidation and strengthening of Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status at the international level. Where necessary, the United Nations continues to assist Mongolia in ensuring its nuclear-weapon-free status to be effective and recognized at the international level. In that context, the Government of Mongolia has informed the Department for Disarmament Affairs that in February 2002 it presented to its two immediate neighbours a draft document entitled "Basic elements of the Treaty between Mongolia, the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status". The launching of two studies on economic vulnerability and ecological vulnerability will help to address the non-nuclear aspects of international security and the development activities of the United Nations system as a whole in Mongolia. The Secretary-General looks forward to the results of the studies, which will be helpful in addressing Mongolia's international security as described in General Assembly resolution 55/33 S.

Notes

[1] The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development estimates that freight and insurance payments of imports equal 6.8 per cent of GDP.

[2] For example, it is estimated that 70 per cent of its main export — skins and hides from livestock — as well as 50 per cent of its exported cashmere and wool, are exported with minimal processing.

[3] Mongolia's land is mostly non-arable, with over 40 per cent covered by desert and 90 per cent susceptible to desertification; forests cover only 8 per cent of the land.

[4] Recent droughts followed by severe winters (*dzuds*) have wiped out millions of livestock.